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similar phenomenon has occurred to any other of your Correspondents. I am,

Sir, Yours, T.T.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

I AM a plain man, a farmer in the country, and am blessed with a notable wife and six fine children, all healthy and well-looking. They had always the example of seeing me and my wife behave in the same manner one day as another, minding our business so as to provide for them, and never wasting time either in reading, writing, or the like.—First, I make bold to tell you of my eldest daughter taking it in her head she would make songs or verses, which pleased us all mightily at first; indeed no one was more touched with her pretty little jingle than myself, never thinking it would come to any harm. At first she made verses only now and then, when any thing particular came across me, or the neighbours; but soon she could never stop writing, nor would she do any thing that would turn to any account, which made me think it was time to stop praising her writing; and besides, I must own, I was not touched as I used to be, partly owing to the wearisome length of her verses, and partly owing to my being so vexed at her doing nothing else. I am sorry to say that my wife continued to praise her, and was quite proud of her abilities, as she called them; but I was much prouder of my second daughter, who never ceased working, either at her needle, or about the house, for which I constantly praised her: but I find that praise is as bad for the one as the other. Betty, my second daughter, gets up at four in the morning, to disturb all the family, and to tire herself before bed-time, and if not praised for it, she is so sulky, I had rather see her idle. Now, I write this, to consult about my third daughter, who seems to have some taste for reading, whether I had better not let her ever open a book; or, would you advise me to let her read a little, and work a little? and if I find she does more of one than the other, I will, with your advice, check her for it. As to my three boys, I will consult you

about them when I have more time; at present I am very busy, having manure to spread, and my children to scold.

S.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

YOUR correspondent, T. in your last number, appears angry at me for my remarks on the character of Sterne. It is to be regretted, that writers, when they differ, do not refrain from indulging in the spirit of controversy. He accuses me, and another writer in your Magazine, under the title of "*a Lover of simplicity of character*," of violating candour, and writing from prejudice against Sterne. I might also accuse him of prejudice in favour of Sterne, and of entertaining a resolution not to have the bandage, put on in the days of his youth, removed from his eyes, that he might see the deformity in those writings; and if I were inclined to retort, I might charge him with betraying the cause of decency in the support of his favourite author. But I will not allow myself to suspect the purity of his intentions. I have no inclination to prolong the controversy respecting Sterne, but am willing to let the cause go to the tribunal of the public, for their verdict on the evidence already adduced; but in my reply, at the closing of the case, I may be allowed to avail myself of the admission of the opposite counsellor, who, like an honest advocate employed in a bad cause, grants all I want, in the following candid concession: "Not that I mean to say, that it is an unexceptionable production, or that there are not many passages in his books, or rather in this one (*Tristram Shandy, and his Sentimental Journey*) which would have been better omitted. His wit often led him to use expressions, *that excite the imagination of his readers in a way not favourable to the government of the passions.*" Here I rest my cause, with the further remarks, that the passions are sufficiently inflammable, and require not the spark of licentious wit to set fire to the train: that this disguised system of sensuality is at least as dangerous to youth as more open obscenity, which disgusts by its

grossness: and that it is not a fastidious delicacy, but a proper respect for decency and propriety, that, to use the simile adduced at the conclusion of T's letter, would prevent the unnecessary exposure of "a beautiful infant sprawling naked on the floor," before a mixed assemblage of youth of both sexes. There would certainly be a want of decency and delicacy in the practice, and an author may bring forward the best principles of our nature, without any mixture of that indelicacy which must detract from the value of the other parts of his writings, and is a legitimate object for criticism and censure. A good way to judge of the delicacy of wit is, to examine if it is fit to be read in a mixed company of both sexes. I cannot allow that goodness of intention excuses writing in such a manner, as to injure the modesty of youth, which is a most excellent preservative against the allurements of vice. If this fence is broken in upon, by whatever means, or by wit however subtle, the security of the youthful mind within the inclosure of virtue is lessened.

In estimating the character of Sterne, and other deceased authors, it is well to doubt of the unqualified admission of the old maxim "*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*—say nothing but good of the dead." The Edinburgh Reviewers have lately amended this sentence with evident improvement—"Benefaction to the living, rather than superstition towards the dead."

I am accused of *un* Irish gallantry, because I do not praise Irish female writers, whether I think them deserving of it or not. I endeavour to guard against nationality, and am desirous neither to give praise to any characters because they are Irish, nor to withhold it from those who justly merit it, whether they are born in this island or in any other part of the world. Nationality, or a blind attachment to country, often leads us to commit the double injustice of despising others, and awarding more than the due meed of praise to our own.

A READER.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

IN your last number I was astonished to find that T. in his "Observations

on the remarks on Sterne," accuses the "Lover of Simplicity of Character" of want of candour; I am not conscious that I was uncandid, but I think that the cause of morality requires that Sterne's writings should be censured, and that Tristram Shandy and the Sentimental Journey should be banished from all well selected libraries. The anecdotes related by the "Reader" and first published in the "Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature," were never contradicted by any writer in that publication, which I consider a proof of their authenticity and of the good sense of the English; but I am sorry to say that the Irish taste is not quite so correct: any person who dares to say that Sterne's writings are immoral is contradicted with the greatest bitterness.

I cannot agree with T. in thinking that the "Reader" is impolite to the Irish ladies, although I am as much attached to the Irish character as T. can possibly be. The "Reader" expresses his high respect for the female sex, and points out some excellent moral writings by English ladies, whose works will be read when Sterne will be forgotten, and sunk into merited oblivion.

It is a true friend who points out errors, and endeavours to correct our taste.

The charge against Sterne's writings is for immorality and indelicacy; I am not such a wild enthusiast as to expect to make converts to my opinion. We have a right to avow our sentiments, and although T. defends Sterne and almost loses his temper to think that his Idol is attacked, yet he has the candour to admit the charge of indelicacy. After his candid concession I am unwilling to carry this controversy farther, and must take my leave of T. by thanking him for the high compliments he pays the female sex, and hoping when he next appears in your pages he will amicably allow others to differ in opinion.

A Lover of Simplicity of character.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

"TO catch the manners living as they rise," is the office of a